

Agriculture

Bromelads sighted as most stunning plants in entire plant kingdom

Bromelads are some of the most stunning plants in the entire kingdom. Native to the Americas, foliage on diverse cultivars is singular in its rosette pattern of stiff, fibrous, fleshy leaves. This unique shape forms a vase that holds the water necessary for growth. Flowers and bracts come in practically every color and shape—truly spectacular.

Eight genera are available in the United States, each containing dozens of cultivars, many introduced every year. Most popularly sold in this area are Billbergias, with pronounced, mottled leaves, sporting a colorful floral spike that will grow to as much as a foot in height; Neoregelia, with leaves that range from dark green to maroon and flowers that nestle deep in the heart of its funnel; Tillandsia, widely cultivated and includes the unique air plant; and Vressia, or flaming sword, the most colorful and most popular with col-

lectors for over a century because of the shape of its sword-like flower spike.

Any bromelad will make that most inept gardener look talented, as it insists on living with even the smallest amount of attention. I have a Neoregalia at a beach house that is left for weeks with the shades drawn and no heat. I just fill its funnel up with water and little blue flowers peek out at me. Well, it is not quite that easy.

Bromelads like the same temperatures as their human companions—70 to 80 degrees during the day, and about 60 at night. The cooler the temperature the slower they develop. Bromelads can stand heat and cold, but not freezing or stagnant air. Take care to provide cross ventilation.

In summer move the plants outside to a shaded terrace or screen porch. Avoid direct sun.

Remove dead leaves promptly, and inspect for varmint, which are not



too numerous, just the usual household invaders like scale and mealy bugs. Remove the scale with a dull knife and dab mealy bugs with an alcohol-doused cotton swab. On the rare occasion an infestation turns severe, it may be necessary to resort to spraying the entire plant with half-strength malathion and isolating in a large plastic bag for three weeks.

Crown rot is a fungus disease that results from the crown of the plant being in constant contact with wet

soil, caused by overwatering. The disease is fatal. Discard the plant and start again.

In the wild, bromelads are epiphytes that obtain nutrients from the air and decomposing debris. In the not-so-wild, a little help is needed, but not much.

Fertilize sparingly every two months. Dilute acid liquid fertilizer to one-fourth strength, and mist the plant with an atomizer. Fish emulsion diluted to half strength and poured into the base about four times a year is very beneficial. Spray the plant every two weeks with clear water to remove dust and fertilizer salts build-up.

Bromelads produce offsets around the base of the mother plant, the latter usually dying about a year after blooming. When these offsets are approximately one-third the size of the original, they may be cut away and potted separately.

Replant in a container just large enough to support it. Bromelads are very top heavy, so it is advisable to put a couple of inches of broken shards in the bottom to provide extra weight.

It is essential to provide a potting mixture that is fast draining. Examples are 1) 1 part peat moss, 1 part pine bark; 2) sphagnum moss; 3) osmunda fiber; 4) tree fern fiber soaked in water 12 hours before using; and 5) commercial cattleya mix. For every gallon per potting medium, mix in ½ ounce dolomitic limestone.

Try to get some roots along with the offset, if you can. If you cannot, don't worry. Bromelads use the roots only as a method of securing themselves. They take in all their food and water throughout the leaf bases. Provide staking for a while, until the new plant has established itself.

If you are into roots, you may treat

the plant base with rooting hormone and set in a container with the base of the plant just above the water surface. The water provides humidity that encourages root growth. Then the plant may be potted in its permanent container.

Huge bromelads with many offsets may be divided by cutting through the entire soil mass and roots. Replant in a fresh soil mixture.

When you definitely get interested in bromelads (that's when your original purchase has expanded to eight in the living room, two in each bath, three over the kitchen sink—you get my drift—) join the Bromelad Society. Write them at POB 2352, Riverside, CA 92516. You'd be amazed at how many bromelad enthusiasts will want to exchange a few offsets with you.

(Note: If you have a question you would like answered in this column, write Mrs. Winslow at POB 42, Hertford, N. C. 27944.)

Author asks: What is freedom?

Where else, but in America, can we enjoy complete freedom—to worship or not to worship, freedom to pursue a career of our choosing, freedom of conversation and communications.

Where else, but in America, can we pursue a career that lets us reap the rewards of our efforts or lets us fail because of whatever reason. Security from failure seems to be more in people's minds.

"Safety net" is a buzz word that is being adopted much too rapidly. Granted, no one wants to fail. The reason we're good is because of our fear of failure—we just won't let it happen if we can help it. In the Soviet Union no one fails, but no one succeeds.



Where else, but in America, can we enjoy more abundance? We are blessed with resources that flourish abundance upon us. Our major problems seem to center around the management of abundance. Such things as food, cars, computers, satellites, etc., are treated as a prob-

lem, but in reality only in America do we struggle with this.

Where else, but in America, can we severely criticize a national leader publicly and get away with it? Opinions of the individual are a guarded right.

Where else, but in America, can we see our flag and then only we will decide what we will do? We can salute, cry, bow our head or do nothing and we have only ourselves to answer why.

Where else, but in America, can we shape our destiny? Through education, perseverance, good luck and guidance we can be somebody.

Yes—we have much to be thankful for, but perhaps we should take the time to think about it more often.

Law enforcement officials and educators join forces against drugs

00-00 0337 Attorney General Lacy Thornburg and State Superintendent Craig Phillips announced plans for a joint drug prevention program entitled DARE—Drug Abuse Resistance Education—for presentation to elementary school students.

The program will be patterned after the DARE Program developed by the Los Angeles, California, Police Department and the Los Angeles Unified School District. It will be taught by specially trained uniformed law enforcement officers.

DARE will use a curriculum developed by education specialists to provide accurate information about alcohol and other drugs, teach decision-making skills, build self-esteem, suggest ways to resist negative peer pressure, and offer alternatives to drug use.

"Law enforcement recognizes the best lasting way to significantly reduce the illegal drug problem is to eliminate the demand," Thornburg said. Effective education programs at the elementary level have tremendous potential to reduce demand. We realize that asking our children to 'just say no' to drugs is not enough. We need to teach them why to say no and how to say no. That's why we are excited about DARE."

Dr. Phillips said, "We anticipate some testing of the program this spring, with full 17 lessons pilot programs beginning in several locations this fall. We expect necessary funding for curriculum development and the pilot programs to come from the federal anti-drug abuse legislation passed by Congress last fall."

Administratively, the DARE program will be part of the comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Defense Program (ADD) within the Department of Public Instruction. Dr. Phillips said, ADD is working with schools in prevention, early identification, and intervention, and is developing programs for use in grades K through 12.

Dr. Phillips and Attorney General Thornburg announced the following members of the DARE Board of Directors:

Ms. Sally Bragg of Raleigh, North Carolina Association of School Administrators.

Mrs. Gladys Graves of Greensboro, North Carolina Association of Educators.

Steve Hicks, Director of the Alcohol and Drug Defense Program,

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Chief Larry Hesser of Hendersonville, North Carolina Sheriffs' Association.

Charles Dunn, Deputy Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, North Carolina Department of Justice.

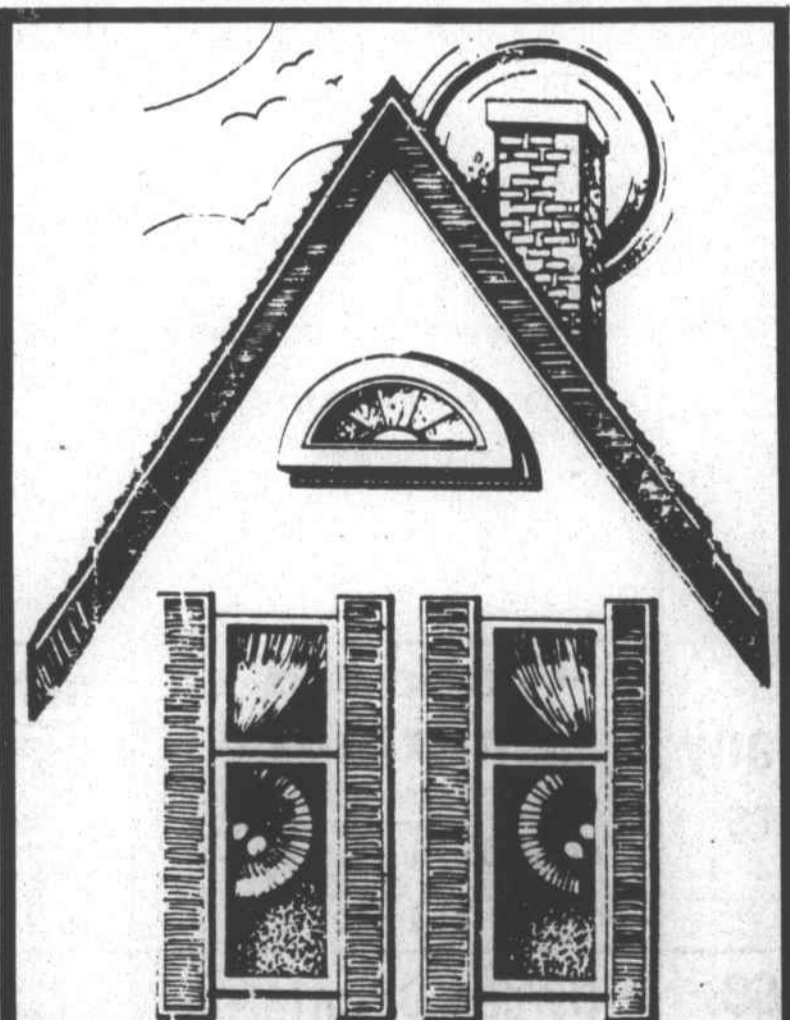
Pilot DARE programs will involve close cooperation between local school officials and local law enforcement. Sheriffs' deputies and police

officers approved for the program will participate in two to three training classes. They will be taught officer-school relationship, development of self-esteem, peer pressure resistance techniques, narcotic recognition, communication skills, child development and classroom evaluations.

Officers and teachers will be jointly trained to insure that the DARE concepts are effectively communicated.

SKILLS, INC.

A sheltered workshop for the handicapped, serving Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans and Chowan Counties, is now accepting applications for membership on its Board of Directors. If you are interested in giving some time and energy to a very worthwhile cause, please send resume' to Skills, Inc., Route 2, Box 362, Elizabeth City, NC 27909 to the attention of Max Mercer, Executive Director. For further information call (919) 264-3377.



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Soybean award meeting scheduled

By STANLEY WINSLOW
CO. EXT. DIRECTOR

(1) You and your spouse are invited to attend the 1987 Soybean Management And Awards Program. It will be held on Thursday evening February 5th at 7:00 p.m. We will meet at the Hertford Volunteer Fire Dept. The men of the Hertford Volunteer Fire Dept. will be preparing a Barbecue Chicken supper for us. Please Call Our Office by 5 p.m. January 30th to let us know if you plan to attend. (426-5428).

Our program is designed to help you become a better overall Farm Manager for 1987. Following the presentation of the Soybean Yield

awards, we will hear the following speakers:

Mr. John Myers, Perquimans County Soil Conservationist, speak on "No till and Water Quality"

Mr. Jack Ward, Area Farm Management Agent, will discuss "Managing Your Farm Business as an Investment"

I will provide: "An Update on Herbicides" and "Cost Cutting Options for Soybeans"

Please plan to attend this very important meeting.

Other meetings: February 3rd, N.C.—VA Field Crops Conference at the Virginia

Beach Pavilion.

(2) We have a meeting organized to discuss the 1987 Farm Program. It has been advertised as a Young Farmers program, but it is Open To All Farmers!!! There is increasing talk of a possible 10 year—100 percent conservation reserve program, but there are no definite facts at this time. We will have all available facts by the meeting date. Tommy L. Riddick, our ASCS Director and Jack Ward, Area Farm Management Agent, will present the program. Please Note Two Changes:

- (1) There will be no meal
- (2) The meeting will be at the Perquimans County Extension Office.

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